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Promotion and protection of human rights: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

United Arab Emirates:* revised draft resolution

Combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the commitment made by all States under the Charter of the United Nations to promote and encourage universal respect for and observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction as to, inter alia, religion or belief,

Reaffirming also the obligation of States to prohibit discrimination on the basis of religion or belief and to implement measures to guarantee the equal and effective protection of the law,

Reaffirming further that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated,

Reaffirming that the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights[1] provides, inter alia, that everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief, which shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of one's choice and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest one's religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching,

* On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

[1] See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

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Please recycle

Welcoming Human Rights Council resolution 16/18 of 24 March 2011,[2]

Reaffirming the positive role that the exercise of the right to freedom of opinion and expression and the full respect for the freedom to seek, receive and impart information can play in strengthening democracy and combating religious intolerance,

Deeply concerned about incidents of intolerance, discrimination and violence against persons based on their religion or belief in all regions of the world,

Deploring any advocacy of discrimination or violence on the basis of religion or belief,

Strongly deploring all acts of violence against persons on the basis of their religion or belief, as well as any such acts directed against their homes, businesses, properties, schools, cultural centres or places of worship,

Strongly deploring, further, also all attacks on and in religious places, sites and shrines in violation of international law, in particular human rights law and international humanitarian law, including any deliberate destruction of relics and monuments,

Concerned about actions that wilfully exploit tensions or target individuals on the basis of their religion or belief,

Noting with deep concern the instances of intolerance, discrimination and acts of violence occurring in many parts of the world, including cases motivated by discrimination against persons belonging to religious minorities, in addition to the negative projection of the followers of religions and the enforcement of measures that specifically discriminate against persons on the basis of religion or belief,

Expressing concern at manifestations of intolerance based on religion or belief that can generate hatred and violence among individuals composing different nations, and, in this regard, emphasizing the importance of respect for religious and cultural diversity, as well as interfaith and intercultural dialogue, which contribute to promoting a culture of tolerance and respect among individuals, societies and nations,

Recognizing the valuable contribution of people of all religions or beliefs to humanity and the contribution that dialogue among religious groups can make towards an improved awareness and understanding of the common values shared by all humankind,

Underlining that States, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, religious bodies and the media have an important role to play in promoting tolerance and respect for religious and cultural diversity and in the universal promotion and protection of human rights, including freedom of religion or belief,

Underlining the importance of education in the promotion of tolerance, which involves the acceptance by the public of and its respect for religious and cultural diversity, including with regard to religious expression, and underlining also the fact that education, in particular at school, should contribute in a meaningful way to

[2] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 53* (A/66/53), chap. II, sect. A.

promoting tolerance and the elimination of discrimination based on religion or belief,

Recognizing that working together to enhance the implementation of existing legal regimes that protect individuals against discrimination and hate crimes, increase interfaith and intercultural efforts and expand human rights education is an important first step in combating incidents of intolerance, discrimination and violence against individuals on the basis of religion or belief,

Welcoming the establishment of the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue in Vienna, initiated by King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, on the basis of the purposes and principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[3] and acknowledging the important role that the Centre is expected to play as a platform for the enhancement of interreligious and intercultural dialogue,

Welcoming in this regard all international, regional and national initiatives aimed at promoting interreligious, intercultural and interfaith harmony and combating discrimination against individuals on the basis of religion or belief,

1. *Expresses deep concern* at the continued serious instances of derogatory stereotyping, negative profiling and stigmatization of persons based on their religion or belief, as well as programmes and agendas pursued by extremist organizations and groups aimed at creating and perpetuating negative stereotypes about religious groups, in particular when condoned by Governments;

2. *Expresses concern* that the number of incidents of religious intolerance, discrimination and related violence, as well as of negative stereotyping of individuals on the basis of religion or belief, continues to rise around the world, condemns, in this context, any advocacy of religious hatred against individuals that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, and urges States to take effective measures, as set forth in the present resolution and consistent with their obligations under international human rights law, to address and combat such incidents;

3. *Condemns* any advocacy of religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, whether it involves the use of print, audio-visual or electronic media or any other means;

4. *Recognizes* that the open public debate of ideas, as well as interfaith and intercultural dialogue, at the local, national and international levels can be among the best protections against religious intolerance and can play a positive role in strengthening democracy and combating religious hatred, and expresses its conviction that a continuing dialogue on these issues can help overcome existing misperceptions;

5. *Reiterates* the call made by the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference at the fifteenth session of the Human Rights Council upon all States to take the following actions to foster a domestic environment of religious tolerance, peace and respect:

(a) Encouraging the creation of collaborative networks to build mutual understanding, promoting dialogue and inspiring constructive action towards shared

[3] Resolution 217 A (III).

policy goals and the pursuit of tangible outcomes, such as servicing projects in the fields of education, health, conflict prevention, employment, integration and media education;

(b) Creating an appropriate mechanism within Governments to, inter alia, identify and address potential areas of tension between members of different religious communities, and assisting with conflict prevention and mediation;

(c) Encouraging the training of Government officials in effective outreach strategies;

(d) Encouraging the efforts of leaders to discuss within their communities the causes of discrimination, and developing strategies to counter those causes;

(e) Speaking out against intolerance, including advocacy of religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence;

(f) Adopting measures to criminalize the incitement to imminent violence based on religion or belief;

(g) Understanding the need to combat denigration and the negative religious stereotyping of persons, as well as incitement to religious hatred, by strategizing and harmonizing actions at the local, national, regional and international levels through, inter alia, education and awareness-raising;

(h) Recognizing that the open, constructive and respectful debate of ideas, as well as interfaith and intercultural dialogue at the local, national and international levels, can play a positive role in combating religious hatred, incitement and violence;

6. *Calls upon* all States:

(a) To take effective measures to ensure that public functionaries, in the conduct of their public duties, do not discriminate against an individual on the basis of religion or belief;

(b) To foster religious freedom and pluralism by promoting the ability of members of all religious communities to manifest their religion, and to contribute openly and on an equal footing to society;

(c) To encourage the representation and meaningful participation of individuals, irrespective of their religion or belief, in all sectors of society;

(d) To make a strong effort to counter religious profiling, which is understood to be the invidious use of religion as a criterion in conducting questionings, searches and other law enforcement investigative procedures;

7. *Calls upon* all States to adopt measures and policies to promote the full respect for and protection of places of worship and religious sites, cemeteries and shrines, and to take measures in cases where they are vulnerable to vandalism or destruction;

8. *Calls for* strengthened international efforts to foster a global dialogue for the promotion of a culture of tolerance and peace at all levels, based on respect for human rights and diversity of religions and beliefs;

9. *Encourages* all States to consider providing updates on efforts made in this regard as part of ongoing reporting to the Office of the United Nations High

Commissioner for Human Rights, and requests in this respect the High Commissioner for Human Rights to include those updates in her reports to the Human Rights Council;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session a report on steps taken by States to combat intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement to violence and violence against persons, based on religion or belief, as set forth in the present resolution.